English July '99

John. W. Szczepaniak

# Cross Comparison of Teletext Based Video Game Magazine Digitiser and Paper Based Video Game Magazine Arcade. Media Coursework

Introduction: First the facts, this study, is based on one months worth of magazine information, from the 7th of June until the 4th of July (4 weeks worth of Digitiser). Arcade magazine is dated July as all paper based games ~~[illegible]~~ mags are dated one month ahead.

The issue of Arcade I've concentrated on is issue 8, in its 8th month, its relatively young for a games mag. With a relatively middle of the road price of £2.80 (prices can range from £1.50 up to £6!), it can be found in most good newsagents among other games publications. It is published by well known company "Future Publishing". On average they release 7 games based publications per month. The current editor is Neil West.

Digitiser, (Digi as its known to its followers) doesn't have issues as such, rather it has a selection of new pages each day, (except Sunday). So thats 6 issues a week. It was launched about the same time that Teletext was launched, January 1st 1993. Although months of planning went on before hand. The lead editor is a Mr Paul Rose, (who also does "Turner the worm" CH 4, pg 196) whose alias on digi is Mr Biffo. I had a short interview with him via phone, but more on that later. Digi can be found on Channel 4 everyday on pages 670 through to pages 675. 24 "issues", researched in total.

I chose these mags in particular, as the only other T. Text based video games mag is on CH 1 and is done by childrens BBC, so it doesn't have the same humour wit or accuracy of Digi. Mainly though, its because it consists of 1 T. Text page and about ~~[illegible]~~

10 Sub-pages. Not nearly in the same league as Digi. In Arcades case, I chose it because it's one of the biggest multi-format mags out there (so there can be a nice meaty comparison) and also because its much easier to get hold of than the excellent but difficult to find American multi-format mags. The price was also reasonable.

More in-depth analysing later.

Interesting task, Sean!

Internet Sites

An in Depth write up is on the following pages.

**Jump straight to your favourite Future magazine:** Choose from the list...

**Future Magazines**
- Computing
- Sports & Entertainment
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**Latest issues**

**Information**
- Jobs @ Future
- Company history
- Licensing information
- Computing Division
- Overseas distribution

**Coming Soon**

PC FORMAT

For PC Owners Who Want It All.

**Find Out More...**


sailingnet.co.uk

The Complete Resource For Sailors.

**Sail On In...**


**Exhibitions**

**National Needlecraft Show '99**
Olympia, 9-12 September 1999
**Find out more...**

**Computer Arts Live**
London Business Design Center,
14-15 September 1999
Manchester Town Hall,
20-21 September 1999
**Find out more...**

**Arcade • About the magazine**

# Arcade

## The Videogame Magazine

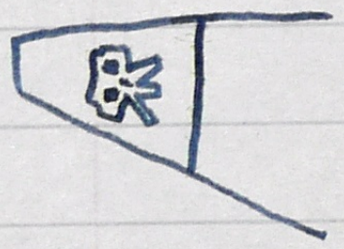
Everyone's doing it... so here's the videogame magazine for **EVERYONE!**

Arcade magazine is a glossy, witty and intelligent multi-format games magazine. It mixes hard-hitting PlayStation, PC, Nintendo 64 and Dreamcast reviews with coverage of more wide-ranging entertainment formats because, let's face it, games don't live in isolation - and neither do we!

We have features that delve deeper than ever before, columnists who really know what they're talking about, pages dedicated to game previews and a regular insight into what it's like to play games round your mate's house in 'Games Night'. Arcade is for experts and novices alike - indeed, Arcade is for anyone who has ever had fun with a videogame.

And you can ensure you never miss a copy by signing up for our fantastic subscription offer, which gives you up to 38% off the regular cover price when you order 12 issues. Click on 'Subscribe' now for more information!

ARCADE



**Arcade • Current issue**

# Arcade

## Contents: July 99

Arcade is tooled-up and ready for action this month, with issue 8 devoted to the noble art of first-person shooters. Our mission: to peek around the corners of the genre, jump out and nail the truth with killer shots to the dome.

An eminent psychiatrist assures us our bloodlust won't extend beyond gaming hours, we learn how to kill folks with notorious soft lads the US Marines and show you how to link up with fellow gunplay fanatics over the Internet.

And as if that wasn't enough, we relate the story of id software through a gripping soap script, have a shufty at Quake III and list the favourite frags of people who should know better.

We also have a word in the shell-like of Lara Croft elect - Lara Weller - and wonder at the way some girls can wear next to nothing and still look class, back the Tekken World Champion into a corner and review a barrel-load of games, including Episode 1: Racer - the first game out of the Star Wars traps.

That's on top of all the news, reviews and issues you can take in without making your brain bulge in an unsightly way. Marvellous.

**July 99 issue**

**On sale**

3 June

**Price**

£2.80 (UK)

**Menu options**
- About the magazin
- View current issue
- Buy current issue
- Subscribe

**Editor**
- Neil West

**Future Gamer**

FUTURE GAMER

The future of games mag

Digi Site.

Title Page

Teletext

July 9 1999

new News | Sport | Finance | Weather | Holidays | TVPlus | Picturegen | Mill

Digitiser
Features
Preview
Games vault
Archive

# features archive

- Tanktics – July 10th. 1999
- Game Boy: Part One
- Interstate '82
- Star Wars: Gaming Strikes Back - Part Four
- Resident Evil3: Nemesis
- Star Wars: Gaming Strikes Back - Part Three
- Ape Escape
- Star Wars: Gaming Strikes Back - Part Two
- Grand Theft Auto 2
- Star Wars: Gaming Strikes Back - Part One
- Vampire The Masquerade: Redemption
- The Big Fight - Part three
- Ecco the Dolphin - PC
- The Big Fight - Part two
- Lovely Lego
- The Big Fight - Part one
- R-Type Delta
- Valley Of The Lost Games - Part two
- The Creed - PC
- Valley Of The Lost Games - Part one
- Power Stone
- Valley Of The Lost Games: Pt1
- Chris Sawyer: Pt2
- Star Wars: The Phantom Menace
- Chris Sawyer: Pt1
- Gaming Toys: Pt2
- Where It's At: Pt3
- Gaming Toys: Pt1
- Where It's At: Pt2
- PlayPocket: League Managers' Association
- Where It's At: Pt1
- Dungeon Keeper 2
- "PlayStation 2" factoids
- "PlayStation 2" tech spec
- Brown Trumpet
- Croc 2
- Rampage 2
- Bad to worst
- Alien Resurrection
- Nuke 'em!
- Kingpin
- Building a better FPS
- Mario Party
- The Legend Of Zelda: Classic or crock? 2
- Unjama Rami: Parappa 2
- The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time
- Unreal Tournament
- Digitiser Awards: Part 2

* There's a quiz later, so you better read and memorize everything on this page

- Duke Nukem Forever
- Digitiser Awards: Part 1
- Silent Hill
- Parlour games again
- Tiberian Sun
- Parlour games
- Metal Gear Solid
- Predict-o-show: Part Two
- Class of 1999
- Predict-o-show: Part One
- Sega's Dreamcast
- What to buy your Nintendo 64
- Kenny lives!
- What to buy your PC
- Hey Mr Music Man!
- What to buy your PlayStation
- Star Wars latest exploits Pt 2
- Games family trees
- Star Wars latest exploits
- Digi's last kick of the ball
- Digi's third crystal ball!
- Superman still on half power!
- Digi's crystal ball, again!
- Cop a load of LAPD 2100AD!
- Digi's crystal ball
- That old magic is back in Heretic 2
- Digi's dream design
- Suzuki kickstarts the Dreamcast
- Discreet Monsters unveils fantasy world
- Return fire returns... on the PC
- It's a small games world
- Me and my Shadow Company
- Star Trekkers get to shoot 'em up
- Games industry lobbies the government
- ECTS news
- Audiomotion - Part two
- Audiomotion
- Barrage
- Sonic Adventure
- Westwood, we love you
- Quote boat - part 2
- Viva Football
- Chopper Attack
- Rock the quote boat
- 20 ways to say "I didn't like it."
- Spacestation Silicon Valley
- Can you thrash Thresh?
- "No, no, I'm not a gamer, honest"
- Gaming's not for softies
- R/C Stunt Copter
- Have you been to bed lately?
- Gameboy - Now it's in "color"!
- Film games smell pt4
- Fifth Element film licence
- Film games smell pt3
- Two kids and a dog save the galaxy
- In his Kalisto element
- Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine

Digi Site.

Title Page 7

Teletext

July 9, 1999

new News | Sport | Finance | Weather | Holidays | TVPlus | BigScreen | Millennium | Digitiser

# Digitiser

news, reviews, gossip & features

**Feature** The Game Boy - the second part of our tasty tribute to the classic games thing

**Preview** Star Wars: Force Commander Real-time strategy makes its debut in Force-related games

**Games Vault** Get the low-down on games past, present and future

**Archive** A to Z with our splendid reviews and previews database

**Mail Us!** How can we make Digitiser even more perfect? Don't just sit there - let us know!

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- PlayStation 2 tech spec
- Brown Trumpet
- Croc 2
- Rampage 2
- Bad to worst
- Alien Resurrection
- Nuke 'em!
- Kingpin
- Building a better FPS
- Mario Party
- The Legend Of Zelda: Classic or crock? 2
- Unjama Rami: Parappa 2
- The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time
- Unreal Tournament
- Digitiser Awards: Part 2

better read and memorize everything on this page

- ways to say "I didn't like it."
- Spacestation Silicon Valley
- Can you thrash Thresh?
- "No, no, I'm not a gamer, honest"
- Gaming's not for softies
- R/C Stunt Copter
- Have you been to bed lately?
- Gameboy - Now it's in "color"!
- Film games smell pt4
- Fifth Element film licence
- Film games smell pt3
- Two kids and a dog save the galaxy
- In his Kalisto element
- Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine

4

- No Trevor Williams of Rage, we will not let you go
- Picking out the hoary bits from E3
- We talk to Trevor Williams of Rage, some more!
- Get up-to-date with the Electronic Entertainment Expo.
- Trevor Williams of Rage!
- Industry building for ego-centrics.
- Grim Fandango previewed!
- What we'd do if we designed games.
- A stroll down Idiot Boulevard, pt II.
- Soldier Of Fortune - mercenary madness.
- A stroll down Idiot Boulevard, pt I.
- Is Heart Of Darkness finally ready?
- A Sonic The Hedgehog Hollywood fantasy.
- Preview of Apocalypse PC/Playstation.
- Prince of Persia - back from the annals of time.
- You'll never eat lunch in this town again
- 1080 Snowboard - if you can handle it, dude
- Encyclo-SNES II - big 'Ns', parties and stuff
- Encyclo-SNES digs the evolution of 'Famicom'
- Does Batman & Robin game stink like the movie?
- Dune 2000 beats pants off the movie
- Encyclogame - Mega Drive Special pt II
- Theme Hospital gets a clean bill of health
- Encyclogame - Mega Drive mega history
- Part 2: You're not a games fan unless...
- Part 1: You're not a games fan unless...
- Part 2: The Diary of a Gamesplayer - 2004AD
- The Diary of a Gamesplayer - 2004AD
- Encyclogame: Entertaining, exciting letter "E".
- Encyclogame: "D" please, Bob.
- Game for a Laugh part 2
- Game for a Laugh
- Tips for the Top in '98. Part 3
- Tips for the Top in '98. Part 2
- Tips for the Top in '98.
- Happy birthday to Digitiser: now we are five!
- It's Christmas time in the computer games' stable.
- Who are the creative blokes behind Worms 2?
- Answers to the 10 most questioned gaming mysteries.
- Entrails and Elephants for Encyclogame.
- What Dodgy Haircuts and Digital Television have in common
- We probe the makers of I-War: part 3
- We probe the makers of I-War: part 2
- We probe the makers of I-War: part 1
- Space Gents: Raging with Neil Critchlow!
- More alphabet trivia in the popular Encyclogame.
- Part two of the Encyclogame where B is for boxes and bears.
- The Encyclogame revisited: A is for Athlete Kings and Amstrad
- Space Gents: Mark Maslowicz gets a grilling!
- The creators of Outcast speak out: part two
- The creators of Outcast speak out: part one
- ECTS: the pick of the show
- Where are they now? - Miner Willy
- Pop-o-Games: Games consoles get a new look
- Time travel: Flashback the third
- Time travel: Flashback Part, er, 2
- Time travel: Flashback Part 1
- Licence to bore
- Arcade Terrorism
- Impersonate your favourite games characters
- Five positive arguments for computer and video games
- Where are they now? - Don Kong
- Where are they now? - Pac-man
- Fighters Megamix Special Part Deux!
- Fighters Megamix Special
- Good reasons to give up gaming
- We interview Discworld King Terry Pratchett
- Part Two Gamespotting
- Gamespotting - breeds of players
- Diary of a Tamagotchi Part 2
- Diary of a Tamagotchi
- Sega, Sony, Nintendo - which is best?
- 10 things to do with a Playstation
- Combining games in the Digitiser lab
- ECTS - Jan '97

News Sport Finance Weather Holidays TV Plus BigScreen Millennium

Copyright

I decided to compare websites first as they aren't directly connected (especially in the case of Arcade) to the magazine itself. So it was best to get it out of the way first.

Arcade's website page is a poor attempt, little more than an advertising page on the Future publishing website.

The Digi site on the other hand, although far more relevant to the actual mag, goes overboard with stuff. (As seen over the past 2 pages they have an entire A-Z of features, starting from Jan 97. Clicking on one of these items brings up the whole feature including screenshots!)

Although "fuller", it seems to lack the zany charm of the T. Text version. It lacks that distinct humour.

There are no references to "the Man" for a start. (More on that later). Apart from the archive it seems disjointed from the T.T. mag.

At the time of writing this the Digitiser website had a complete overhaul after fans complained it wasn't relevant enough. Information about it was not included as this project is based on the state of the 2 magazines from the 3rd of June to the 4th of July, and the website "re-launch" happened after these Dates.

In the case of the Digi website, it has undergone many changes before, its said that the internet is in a constant state of evolution. At one point it even had a playable game on it. I looked hard but could not find any reference to the maker of the site, Paul Rose.

<u>Addreses for the magazines are as follows:</u>

<u>Arcade:</u> Arcade
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW
Tel: 01225 442244
Fax: 01225 732275
E-Mail: arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk

<u>Digitiser:</u> Digitiser PO Box 297
London SW6 1XT
Website: www.teletext.co.uk/Digitise.htm
E-mail: digitiser@teletext.co.uk
Other digi related sites to be advertised on the mag are:
www.bubblegun.com (by Paul Rose)
there was another "Biffo vision", but has since been closed.

# The Magazines in Depth
## Arcade / Digitiser

This section is really just an excuse to highlight some of Digi's more unusual features. The kind that aren't found in other mags, or common features that have such a bizzare twist or are so far removed from the norm that they wouldn't really be able to be fitted into the comparison sections, its exclusive items.

Arcade is your standard (although rather good) games mag, so it will be easy to go "in-depth" on it. Its section will be done first and will be quite short because of that. (More of info on it in comparisons/summary)

This section will include anything missed in the intro. Points covered here will also be used later for comparison.

Arcade: Alot was covered in the "Net" section. Its monthly, costs £2.80 and has 148 pages cover-cover. (page no. range from 80 pages up to an absurd 400 pages for some of the regular Japanese mags.) Its also multi-format meaning it concentrates on all current modern machines, (as can be seen on the front cover), it also includes a small section on retro games/mags/systems. (retro is used for classic games stuff that is classed as "antique", and is quite difficult to get hold of, its not produced any more.) Coverage-wise they seem to concentrate more on the Playstation and PC than anything else, strange as N64, a Nintendo only mag, manages to cover over 100 pages fully of usefull news/facts/ reviews etc.

Review ratings are based on a 5 star system, 1 for the worst, 5 for the best. They also have an uppers and downers box with the best and worst points listed. Review sizes can also range ~~from~~ from a small column with screenshot, 1/18th of the page, right up to 2 full pages, the biggest I've seen has been only 2 pages long.

They also have the standard tips + cheats pages, multi-format of course, weighing in at around 8 pages. Current issue had 29 games tipped. It also has the usual ads, compos, interviews (loads!) and special features. (This was a first person shoot-em up special, so a big feature on that.) It also had a very informative and usefull charts section. Very comprehensive. (more later)

Apart from your standard games/accessories and internet features it also has a unique guide to non-game related things. Featured are the best books, music CDs, comics of the month as well as the most played pieces on the Jukebox. They also have the latest board games, toys and general weird gadgets. The best feature though is a review of all the latest cinema releases, videos/DVDs to rent and also videos to buy. Not a new feature in games mags, (Gamesmaster also did it) but rare nowadays and quite usefull as well. Neatly laid out, lots of screenshots, some 5 star rating system, known as "entertainment extra."

Anything not featured now, will be in the comparison section.

Digitiser: This feature was written mainly to highlight the items which are found on Digitiser but not other similar forms of media, but first the basics.

Digitiser is comprised of 7 title pages on CH4 T.T. (teletext). Pages 670 through to 676. Each title page then has a number of sub pages, (SP), the number of which can range from between 2 up to sometimes 18 SP. Over the month of reasearch I counted 714 (aprox.) SP, 69 of which were adverts, so a total of 645 games related SP. The adverts are normally companies promoting free internet access or games competitions to win games/consoles etc.

Each day there is a fresh new set of TP and SP, except Sunday. (The weekend-~~issue~~ issue doesnt change) Sources suggest the pages change at around 4'o clock in the morning. On Saturday the weekend issue starts.

Weekday (wy) Issue

Unless its a very special occasion, like a games trade show (ie. a big event) the format of the pages doesnt change. P1 (Pg 671) on weekdays is the news page. Normally done by Gossi the dog, "The rumour hound." On the last SP they is a mini rumour page, done by humerous fictional characters, from Chester fisho (the horny fish) to Incinsere dave and Zombie Dave. (who's final comment is a lunch of mumbles that disguises his swearing.) "Yrrrr frrr-grrrn Trrrds!" This is classic example of Digi's surreal warped humour (more on that in the summary.) P2. is normaly the reviews P., if there are no reviews then they have a Previews P. In reviews they have the usual uppers/downers as well as 6 ratings (including overall %) (More in the comparisons).

Weekend (wd) Issue

The content of P3 really varies from day to day. Often its Encyclo game, (A-Z of gaming) or normally a previews or surreal quiz page. P4 is the letters page on both the Wy and wd. Wy = 5 SP normally, the 5th is normally "The Man" page. The are normaly 4-5 letters a day. Over the whole month, the total of all letters screened was 196.

P5 is the Tips pages. The Pseudonym of the tips writer, has said is Digitorial (editorial) is "Mr Udders", real name unknown (more in Summary). To add humour these pages are also done by fictional characters. Normally Mr + Mrs Nude, lots of innuendo in the comments. They were killed off so they often have "the evil Samaritan." There have been many characters over the years. You can write in and ask for help, or send in cheats.

P6 is the charts page, and its the most sober, boring and unread TP in the whole of Digi. Its said so by readers who write in. It consists of 8 pages of the top 10 games charts (PS. N64 etc.) including Digis top games of '98 + 99. charts compiled by E.L.S.P.A.

On weekends though its whole format changes. P1 becomes Panel 4. Where theres a 4 week vote, each weekend for 3 weeks one of 3 regular journos (Violet Berlin, Tony Mott and Stuart Campbell), on a 4rth week theres normally a viewers opinions, or sometimes Fat Sow, a pig with controversial views. (Fat Sow is normally on wy, instead of Gossi) These sections can be anything games related.

P2 is Digitorial which is basically an editorial, review of the past week, upcoming features and a release schedule.

P3. "your game here" is where a viewer sends in a review of his most loved or hated game. Its simpler, with only an overall mark at the end. A couple of years ago it used to be reviews of only retro games, but things changed.

P4 on weekends is letters, but with a twist, ~~a~~ only letters that are to do with the weeks hot topic are shown. Topics can range from "Who will win the christmas games war?" to "Had any vider games dreams," the replies can be even weirder.

The contents can vary greatly on P5, its normally a features page with interviews or my personal fave, "Prank calls by phoning Honey." P6 charts remain the same except they have a Morset Lewis cartoon.

<u>The Man:</u> The main reason behind the "in depth" section, since I wouldn't be able to include it in the comparisons section, as there isn't any equivelant on any other form of media. It would be a shame to leave it out as its an important part of Digi.

Probably the best way to describe it would be as ~~the~~ Digi's mascot.

His name at one point was changed to "Man Alive", but was axed later.

One of the mans many ~~man~~ incarnation, this time as a fisherman. Notice the face (Top Right)

Man Diary (MD) follows the surreal day to day events of a character known only as the man.

The humour (etc.) found here is part of the very essence that makes Digi, unique.

Ask any fan of Digi and they'll mention the MD, indeed so will anyone who's seen a weeks worth of issues. Although my personal favourite bit of Digi, you will either love it, or hate it. Many people have written in praising it, and critisizing it, so much so that they held a ~~vea~~ viewers poll to see if they should axe it, or keep it, thankfully they vote to keep it was.

It diffiult to describe it if you haven't actually been reading it for the past 3 years. The actual facial look of the Man himself has changed about 5 times since I started watching, but the structure behind the diary entry has remained the same. As can be seen if you read the picture (top right) it stands on the blurry line between fantasy and reality. It has a subtle almost dry surreal humour. It becomes so strange its to become silly. Yet amidst all this strangeness, humour and lack of ~~[illegible]~~ clarity, its kind of shocking when it dawns on you that all this is created by you average hard working journo type people.

Due to MD dream-like state, its diffiult to remember all of the situations or occupations he's been in. The one pictured is good but unfortunately isn't the very best. Some pieces include when he worked for a farmer who farmed cough syrup, the farmer 20 years previous found a bottle in a corn field and had the idea of farming it this way, no-such luck. Or when set up a statue of horse with a balloon, that inflated near its rear occasionally to make it look like cow, or when he became a giant catcher.... (etc.etc.etc.)

Occasionely, besides the man they have the Mans Daddy, and the mans son (I've personally never read this)

I dont know about the son, but the dad is a comedian. His jokes are either the long type (ie: "a man walks into a bar....) or the "What do call a..." type of joke which has connection to famous peoples names, which he mocks. Visually, his face (Top right corner, like MD, no pict. sorry) can only be described as a cross between the underside of a shoe, a gas mask and an ants head. Sorry about no picture, but its only on seldomly.

Only other thing to take the place of MD are his mock Film scripts, such as ET 2 where Elliot drags a dead ET around on his shoulders before realising its a dead cat. A humorous diversion from Digi but not on a par with MD.

Worth a mention, is the slight (very slight) level of interaction you get from pressing reveal. Pressing said button "reveals text and/or a picture". (nothing special, as T.T. can't handle fine details.) Found mainly in the letters page these reveals actually have nothing to do with videogames. The best are probably their regular character ones: The Snakes (a pair of "gangsta rapping" snakes) Mr T ("Keep away from ma bins!") and Morse + Lewis (no relation to TV) Though as seen to the right, they occassionally take requests, notable ones are their animal series. (moc-a-moc-moc!) It started when a viewer complained of no screenshots, so they drew some fictional ones (very blocky, poor quality) then someone said what else can you draw and it developed from their. sp. Character ones (eg Mr T) have been around for ages though.

If you didn't "reveal", the picture and caption above wouldn't be visible. Not the best reveal.

A note must go to all the characters that appear on Digi, whether fictional or not.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Biffo (Paul Rose) | Mr T |
| Mr Udders | Morse + Lewis |
| Violet Berlin | The Snakes |
| Stuart Campbell | The Man/Daddy/Son |
| Tony Mott | The Sun |
| Fat Sow | Good/Evil Samaritan |
| Gossi the dog | Mr/Mrs Nude |
| Phoning Honey | Dennis man of Zinc |
| The Spacemen | Chester Ficho |
| Zombie Dave/otaku | Panmeister |

No doubt there are many more that I missed, as well as more to come.

The reasons why Digi took up so much space compared to Arcade is because alot of it wouldn't be able to be included later anywhere else, and most of Arcades sections will be highlighted in comparisons and the summary. There are also more pictures of Digi as most it would be hard to explain, Arcade is more generic and the layout is similar to other mags (not only videogaming ones) so less need for pics.

PLAYSTATION NINTENDO 64 GAME BOY PC

HOT!

The videogame magazine

July 1999
Issue 8 £2.80

# Arcade

## WIN A COIN-OP!
A £2,000 *Space Invaders* machine could be yours

## PLAYSTATION
143 games reviewed

## SEGA'S DREAMCAST
Is it time to dump your PlayStation in the canal?

3D SHOOTER SPECIAL!

# ARE YOU QUICKER THAN CLINT?
TIME TO PROVE IT IN...

Future Publishing
Your Guarantee Of Value
JULY 1999 £2.80
07
9 771464 907020

## QUAKE III: ARENA
The biggest game of 1999

## QUAKE II
On PlayStation and N64

## PERFECT DARK
The sequel to *GoldenEye*

## EXPOSED! NEW LARA MODEL IN HER UNDIES!

148 pages of
- Syphon Filter
- Drunk students
- Tekken champs
- Movies
- Music
- & More

## PLUS!
- Will videogames turn you psycho?
- How to play on-line
- 20 classic shooters reviewed

STAR WARS! FIRST NEW GAME REVIEWED!

# Comparisons

This is it, the bulk of the coursework, the point was overall to write a comparison of 2 ~~mag~~ forms of media, a media study. Included here will be in-depth analysis of the differences, similarities and ~~echo~~ exclusive items of each mag. Points highlighted here will be covered again in the Summary.

What better to start a comparisson on than the covers of the mags. (Arcade on the previous page.) As thats the first thing you see of a magazine. Indeed it can be the cover that makes or breaks a magazine at launch. If you're a new time mag-buyer (or even an old timer/regular - looking for a change) it'll be the cover that draws you to a mag or not. For paper based mags on shelves its the cover and pitts. then the free gift (I was drawn to a previous Arcade issue because of a free games history book), if any and finally the text. If a cover isn't good, regardless of how well written it is, it'll be overshadowed by its rivals because people won't pick it and discover how good its is.

From left to right: Selected Page (on hold) Name of T.T. (eg: CEEFAX) (ie: Teletext) No. page its cycling through (600 – 699) Date: Sep 01 Time: 19:04:00

These are fast-text keys, used to quickly skip to different pages easily.

Above them is an advert bar, it changes from day to day and advertises other T.T. pages

Digi's cover is simple, to the point and also doubles as its ~~index~~ contents page! Unlike Arcade (or any other paper-based mags) its cover doesn't change monthly. (It has changed about 4 times though, 2 years ago when it was still on Pg 170 and after its relaunch.). That doesn't matter though, because Digi doesn't have to bought off a shop shelf, its free! Anyway, T.T. is so limited, it would involve alot of effort and wouldn't be very good anyway. Current just is good, sci-fi like, considering T.T. is so blocky.

Arcade on the other hand is far more professionly done (not that Digi is unprofesional.) (unfortunatelly alot of detail is lost because its in B/W)

The first thing to strike you about the cover is that its been made solely with the male gamer in mind (considering how few girl games are out there it would be suicide to release a games publication solely with the G.G in mind. Most mags go for an equal gamer stance). The is apparant when you read "Exposed! New Lara model in her undies!" and then read "Are you quicker than Flint?" next to a picture of him brandishing that famous magnum from Dirty Harry. The first sentence boosts your manliness and second one challenges it. The first gives the newbie male G. curiosity while the 2nd subconsciously challenges the raw animal gamer in all of us. It says "3D shooter special", and to prove you are quicker you'd buy the mag. Another subtle affect is the bullet holes dotted about the front and all along the spine.

Its quick to boast of its 148 pages, but it doesn't say that 21 of them are adverts. (adds can range from 8-120 pages in a mag). Digi only had 69 out of 714 p. as ads. 127 p. of game related stuff Arc, isn't bad. To be honest the film like cover picture has nothing to do with videogames! This is bold of Arc. compared to other mags who never us film footage for a cover unless they're doing a big feature on the game based on the film, even then it tends to be in-game art. I don't think there's ever been a game based on C. Eastwood movie. The only connection being fast shoot. Most of the time Arc. (not all) uses this "off-target" type of cover. games mags seldomly use game graphics for their covers, to be modern its normally the game art.

Although the title, "Arcade", is obscured slightly, the classic logo of a space invader inside an A is instantly recognisable to regular Arc readers. (Arcades being where Space I. started out.)

It's a bold cover, all the names in plain print in the bar at the top. (No mention of Dreamcast though.). It gives a brief list of its choice features and compos on the left. The price and date, small but clear, top right. The word "HOT!" refers to nothing, it's just there to make it look good. To finish it off, there are Star Wars characters, bottom right, since S.W. is popular, it being mentioned would entice newbies to buy a copy!

As said, Arc. has 148 pages (cover to cover) of which 21 are adverts. If you wanted to be technical you could say Digi had a larger 714 (aprox.) pages. Thats sub-pages, each one the size of a T.V. screen. (reasons why Digi has more explained in Summary). With 69 ads, thats 645 pages of surreal, almost drug/dream like humour. Digi also had more letters, 196 (aprox) compared to Arc's 14. Though Digi's were much shorter, some only a line of text long. Arc's were longer and were better written, about more wholesome gaming topics than Digi's. (its star letter was rather pointless, this guy liked boxing ~~mais~~ pictures of his gran.). Arc's Star letter recieves a free T-Shirt as a prize, there are no star letters in Digi.

Reviews. What self-respecting mag would be complete without reviews. Traditionally reviews were the sole reason behind a mag. You'd buy it, and it would tell you which games were hot and which were not, so you decide what to buy. In recent times though reviews have become greatly overshadowed by the other aspects of the mag, this happened as Games mags become flashier and flashier. (Early mags date back to around 1981) Digi's system for reviewing has your basic page or 2 written about the game (or 4+ if it's really big.) and then 6 rating catagories along with uppers/downers and final comment. 6 catagories: Gamplay, Graphics, Presentation, Sound, Innovation (these 5 are rated 1-10 ie: 4.0, 4.5, 5.0 etc.) then there's the overall % which is out of a hundred. This is meatier compared to Arcade's sparce 2 page max, 5 star reviews. This though comes at the expense of screenshots. (Impossible on T.T.)

One of the games reviewed by both mags was "Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis." (Strange, as because Digi is written on a day to day basis while Arc is written on a month to month basis, often 1.5 months before the issue is due out, if not more, Digi should have had the review done first ages ago. Problem is developers are reluctant to send review copies. (More in Summary). (There were other games, but I didn't want to confuse you with an unknown gaming genre, so we'll stick with tennis.)

While Arc. has a modest single page review, Digi has a larger five screen (page) review, although one was actually and ad. So 4 pages Vs 1 page. (Digi actually only had 11 reviews that month compared to Arc's over 20 reviews) Arc. did have 5 screenshots though. Score wise Arc. gave it 4 stars (out of 5) saying it will put a smile on your face. 4 stars should be technically a score of between 61-80 %, if each star equals around 20%, but they dish out 4 stars ~~so~~ liberally as if it were 85%. (They give alot of good games this score). Digi gave it a more understandable 82%. In this respect Arc's. reviews are inferior to Digis in that its difficult to work out what to buy from the final score alone. They're opinions for U/D also greatly differed. Although both accurate, Digis is better designed with a <u>much</u> better rating system.

Its difficult to write about staff members at Digi as not much is said, and what is said is normally to strange to repeat. Yet this section is actually where the biggest similarities of the 2 mags ~~lay~~ reside. Of the 3 official jounos (V. Berlin, T. Mott, S. Campbell) that Panel 4 on Digi (They have very bizzare characters of themselves), Stuart actually also does a column for Arc. once a month as well. They have 4 jounos in Arc., one writes from the USA, another is the Japan correspondant the 3rd a games insider (he's a designer) and the 4th is Stuart, a fanatical gamesplayer who's also a freelance jounalist. Similar to ~~Digis~~ Digi's 4 columns (although one of theirs is written by a viewer.) His 2 sections are both very different from one another. His Digi column is normally a critisizing of the problems in the industry. His Arc. column, from what can I can make out, is what games he's currently playing the most.

So they're well liked in the industry

~~The other~~ Of the other 2, I haven't seen Tony Mott anywhere else, but Violet Berlin can often be ~~seen~~ seen in the afternoon on childrens programs. (at one point she was a V. games T.V. show).

Another common feature they share is the fact that their staff writers ~~aren't~~ aren't exclusive to their magazine. There are 9 regular members of staff at Arc. (Not include the publishing staff) but if include all the contributers from other magazines (made by Future Publishing) the number of people who work on the mag rises to 49+! Non exclusiveness was proven by S.C. writing for Digi. Its humerous to note that most readers think the writers are exclusive and that when they say ~~are~~ that mags system (ie Playstation Max = P.5., N64 Pro = N64) is the best and better than the rest, they really mean it. In reality though, while someone might say that system is best, in the systems rival mag, the next month, he ~~might~~ might praise the other and criticize the first.. They probably dont really care, and are only doing it because thats what they paid to do. Alot of reviews in Arc.. that aren't N64 are done by the staff of N64 mag. Since all the mags are owned by F. Publishing and are all in the same building, the swapping of staff is common.

At the time writing incidently (remember this is being written about 3 months after the purchase of issue 8 of Arcade!) in a recent Arc. issue, I saw that Paul Rose (AKA Mr Biffo) is writing for Arc! Unfortunatly I didn't buy the issue so don't know much more about it. It would have been interresting and made a good comparison to compare the writing styles, of him and the other Arc. writers. Would Mr Rose have retained that same Digi humour? Had I had issue, I could have featured the fact anymore as it wasn't in the issue I was comparing, issue 8. (There was no mention of it in Digi)

Although its said it isn't important to have screenshots as long as the writing is proffesional and good. That's why Digi does well even though it has no picts. The humour and surreaness makes up for it. You're kept entertained and don't need picts to keep you looking at the page. ↘

There is one topic that really needs pics. to do well. The least read and least popular page in Digi is the charts. As said before, you can't really add humour to them, so there's no real point in reading them. (Their one saving grace is they're updated daily, unlike in Arc., where by the time you read them, they could be hopelessly out of date.) Many viewers have suggested putting a snakes cartoon in its place. ("Dat is da beatbox!") Arcade has a wide variety of charts, (like Digi): Official multiformat top 40/ Top 20 charts (for each system.) / Jap top 10/ USA top 10. They also have top 10 quotes. (10 things Mario would never say, 10 confusing things from J. Carmack creator of Doom, etc.) As well as others that change from month to month. (Gaming moments /sounds etc.) What makes also so interesting is every game listed has a screenshot (unlike Digi) and every game has a box of text with a comment, which is sometimes humerous. (unlike Digi, not the humour part, the text boxes). Although accuracy dwindles day by day it's always interesting to look at the pics and read the captions. (This specially so for the retro charts.)

Arcade is obviously the more straight faced of the 2. Yet even though Digi may be zany and laid back, it's still very factual and accurate. The plus it has over Arc. (that totally makes up for lack of pics and slick design) is its speed. If for example a big gaming event, (say ECTS) happens in August, the mags wont have it until maybe Sept. or Nov, while Digi will have a big feature on it the next week (For paper mags it depends on how far the big event is from the day of printing) For such events, they have a well balanced blend of fact and humour.

adverb

Some gaming mags tend to be aimed at certain parts of the gaming public. (otaku, casual, etc.) Digi isn't actually aimed at any segment of the gaming public, in fact a large ammount of its viewers don't even play games! (Many have written in saying they have no interest in gaming but find it so well written and funny that they read it!)

Arc though is squarly aimed at the 13-21 year old male, it's also a slightly more casual gamer mag as there isn't an abundance of foreign coverage.

Numbers wise Digi is the most read, boasting over 10 million viewers. I don't know Arcade's selling numbers, but, the UK's biggest selling mag (no, it's not Arc.) sells about 3 million copies a month, less than a 3rd of Digi, though Digi is free. (Technically the whole of England could watch it).

Any final points will be covered in the summary, as well as wrapping up loose ends.

# Summarisation

The reason why Digi is bigger than Arc. (although Arc. has more "substance") is that what limited features Digi can do, it does well and to the best of its ability. It can do "letters" easily, so it maxes out its ammount, while Arc. has to keep it limited to save space.

Digi makes up for lack of really amazing features and screenshots, with humour. If a paper based mag, (with price tag) had the same style of writing as Digi, there'd be an uproar. Digi can get away with it because its free. So its has slightly more freedom over what it writes. Arc. is succesfull because it capitalises on the niche for the mature, adult casual gamer.

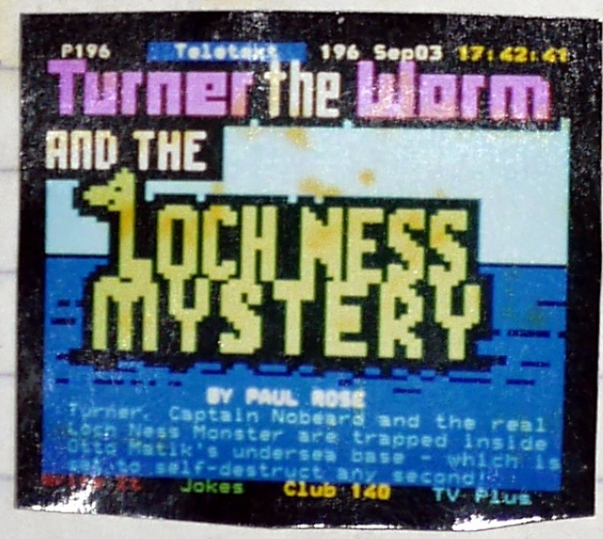
Some Digi's surrealness can be explained by the ~~m~~ short, telephone interview I had with its maker and editor, Paul Rose. He had said that when they first started on the mag, the other mags ~~on~~ the market at the time, glorified all the journalists and made them out to be celebrities. (They were always posing for photos etc.) He said he felt "they had no right to do it!" So at first the mag was annonamys with no reference to the staff. At this point it was still very sober and normal, it name hadn't even been changed to Digi yet. People kept writing in though asking about it, so they decided to give fake ones. Of all the ones being thrown around, Mr Biffo was the one decided on. "Due to immature nature really. We'd say things like, oh, thats a biffo hat," and so a star was born. (well actually, a rather strong T.T. personality) It was at this point they injected that surreal humour into the mag, it did well and was carried on. Unfortunately I was unable to interview the Arcade staff.

Both Arc. and Digi are 2 very different vid. mags. from opposite ends of the spectrum, both in content, writing styles, appearance and layout. Theyre also both very

succesful. The reason, partly behind this success is the fact that its not very original, there aren't many new features in it that aren't found in other mags.

Alot of its best features were borrowed from other previously successfull mags. The 5 star rating system was copied directly from CVG (released 1980), (Previously CVG had a far more complicated rating system, too difficult to explain) The idea of featuring things (comics, movies etc.) besides was also done previously in Gameworld. Most paper mags normally have a small feature on manga, since gamers like myself also have an affinity for manga, as alot games are based on manga. (Manga mags also have features on games). Even the uppers and section was borrowed from our very own Digi. The benefit of this, is that because so many mags have trodden the water before, Arc. can select the best particular attributes that made them so good, improve on it and use it themselves. (There is so much of this going on you'd thayre Japanese!) For a fine example, take interviews, most mags have 1 key interview per month, Arc has no less than 6 (!), all with large games insiders.

Although this project may be 24 pages long, its is by no means complete. Things I would have liked to have included are interviews with Arc. staff (as well as their readership numbers.). I also would have liked to ask Paul Rose more questions. Such as about this new short film he's writing (that might get published). What games he played when he was younger? Who is mister Udders? Have parents protested against Digi ever? If I'd had time I would have also liked to do this over a times of a months worth of mags. As well a bigger feature on P.R. writing for Arc (!). (Kind of ironic really).




← Turner the Worm. One of Paul Rose's other T.T. projects besides Digi.: CH4 pg 196 Its a rather damn good comic!

Obviously a topic that really interests you, John!

A mammoth piece of research with detailed analysis, showing an insider knowledge of the subject.

Very well done.